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UNCLAS ALGIERS 002045

SIPDIS

SENSITIVE

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: PREL WI MO AG UNGA

SUBJECT: ALGERIAN DRAFT RESOLUTION ON WESTERN SAHARA IN
UNGA FOURTH COMMITTEE

¶1. DCM represented the Embassy at a meeting October 3 convoked by MFA with the ambassadors of North and South American states. MFA Acting Director General for the Americas Abderrahmane Benmokhtar explained that Algeria is about to introduce a draft resolution on the Western Sahara in the UNGA's fourth committee when it convenes next week, and was briefing regional groups of ambassadors in advance of the introduction of the draft (text faxed to USUN and NEA/MAG). Benmokhtar with a straight face stressed that Algeria thought there should be "no controversy" about the draft and hoped to have it passed by consensus, but he added that Morocco may call for a vote. If that were the case, Benmokhtar said Algeria hoped that member states would vote yes since abstentions "would only serve to solidify Morocco's intransigence."

¶2. Benmokhtar said the main operative points of the Algerian draft: (1) underlines UNSCR 1495 in which the Council expressed its support for James Baker's peace plan "as an optimum political solution"; (2) strongly supports the efforts of the SYG and his Personal Representative to achieve a mutually acceptable political solution to the dispute; (3) calls for the parties and regional states to cooperate fully with the SYG and his Personal Representative; (4) reaffirms the responsibility of the UN to the people of the Western Sahara; and (5) calls upon the parties to cooperate with the ICRC in determining the fate of missing persons and to release all those held since the beginning of the conflict.

¶3. (SBU) In the follow-on discussion, Benmokhtar stressed that the Security Council, in Resolution 1495, unanimously supported the Baker plan. He said Algeria has no territorial ambitions in the Western Sahara, but only seeks to support the Sahrawi people's right to self-determination. Benmokhtar said Algeria had taken the initiative to introduce the draft resolution "in order to avoid maneuvers," presumably on the part of Morocco. As the meeting concluded, a member of the MFA's IO department told DCM that Algeria only sought the implementation of the Baker Plan.

ERDMAN